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Illustrated title-page of Philip von Zesen's
Description of Amsterdam

The
DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY
ON THE HUDSON

BY
LUCY M. SALMON

WITH SIX ILLUSTRATIONS

POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK
1915

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This paper was originally prepared for the celebration of the Hudson-Fulton anniversary in 1909. Part of the material for it was collected in Holland, although it was of a character difficult to cite by "chapter and verse." Three weeks in Amsterdam and the Hague, a day in Utrecht, a trip to the Helder with a glimpse of the island of Texel from which Henry Hudson had sailed on the *Half Moon*, another day in Brill the high tower of whose cathedral Mary Princess of Orange is said to have climbed when William of Orange was leaving Holland for England,—this supplementing two previous visits to Holland, while it gave nothing in the way of discovery of new material, did give a picture of the material conditions out of which the Dutch West India Company grew that has helped the writer to have a better understanding of the history of the Chartered Company on the Hudson. The illustrations secured at that time may give the reader an interest in the subject. The paper itself is but an attempt to re-state familiar facts and to gather into convenient form some of the data available for a study of ancestry.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrated title-page of Philip von Zesen's *Description of Amsterdam* *Frontispiece.*

It was the fashion in the seventeenth century for cities of the Netherlands to have themselves described and illustrated by some well-known writer of the day. The *Description of Amsterdam* is an excellent example of works of this class, and it has more than seventy copper-plate illustrations and maps which are invaluable records of conditions in Amsterdam in 1664 and earlier. The illustrated title-page symbolizes the wide commercial interests of the city. The coat of arms of Amsterdam appears on the right. The copy of von Zesen from which this illustration is taken was obtained at the Hague in 1909 for the library of Vassar College.

The Dutch West India Company, Haarlemmerstraat, Amsterdam *Facing page 16*

This building was occupied by the Dutch West India Company in 1623. The approach to the second story from the side is a common architectural feature seen in Amsterdam to-day, and it may be seen on a few houses in the lower part of Poughkeepsie. It suggests the variation seen in the double external stairway used in the original construction of the entrance to the Main Building, Vassar College.

Seal of the City of New Amsterdam, 1654.

Facing page 20

This illustration has been drawn from a copy of the seal on a plaque issued by the Holland Society of New York in 1913 and it is an exact reproduction of the wax seal authenticated by the Society. "The cord of white silk" has been adapted from the seal attached to the Charter of the City of Albany given in *Historic New York*, edited by Maud Wilder Goodwin, Alice Carrington Royce and Ruth Putnam. An exhaustive history of the *Seal and Flag of the City of New York*, edited by John B. Pine, 1915, gives illustrations and descriptions of the seals used by the city.

The monogram, G. W. C., on the escutcheon, stands for *Geootroyeerde West Indische Compagnie*, or *Chartered West India Company*.

The Dutch West India House on the Singel, Amsterdam *Facing page 30*

The central building was occupied for a time by the Dutch West India Company.

The Dutch West India House on the Rappenberg, Amsterdam *Facing page 36*

This building was finished and occupied in 1642. It is now used as a warehouse. The device of the Dutch West India Company can be seen on the tympanum facing the street; the entrances at the two ends of the building embody the same architectural ideas noted in the building on the Haarlemerstraat.

The Weepers' Tower, Amsterdam . . . *Facing page 40*

This illustration is taken from von Zesen. When the Dutch sailors embarked on long voyages their friends bade them farewell from this tower. A bas-relief on one side represents a woman weeping and a ship leaving the shore; it bears the date 1569. The tower stands not far from the central railway station in Amsterdam.

THE DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY
ON THE HUDSON

THE DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY ON THE HUDSON

Oliver Wendell Holmes tells us that if we are to educate a boy properly, we must begin with his grandfather. It is even more true to say that if we are to understand the conditions in the midst of which we live, we must study not so much these conditions as they exist to-day, as their origin in a remote past. As far back as we can trace our ancestral tree, just so far in the past do we find the influences that have helped to make us what we are. The history of America does not begin with the adoption of the federal constitution that made possible a united country, or yet with the Declaration of Independence that made possible a new nation, or even with the discovery of America, whether that discovery be attributed to Columbus or to the Norsemen. Its beginnings are in Europe, and where the history of Europe begins, there begins our own history.

Dr. Holmes does not specify whether he had in mind the paternal or the maternal grandfather of the boy. We whose fortune it is to have our homes in the Hudson Valley, whether temporarily or permanently, are confronted by a similar question,—one of our national grandfathers was Dutch, and one was English, while a long list of kinsmen

connect us with nearly every country of Europe. Shall we attribute to the one or to the other the origin of the conditions about us? The answer must be—to both and all. Yet it is comparatively easy to classify roughly the main sources of our indebtedness to each and to trace back to Holland, for example, many of the distinctive characteristics of the life about us. If then we are to understand some of the unique conditions that have prevailed for three hundred years in the Hudson Valley and the fringe of territory on its borders, we must seek the ancestral home of its first settlers and organizers. If we are to understand why the Hudson River is bordered by extensive estates, why the somewhat infrequent towns on its banks have narrow streets with houses built on narrow lots, crowded together, practically without front or side yards, but with long yards in the rear; why many houses have stoops; why the children beg from house to house on Thanksgiving Day; why we eat cookies and waffles; why we cultivate flowers to sell rather than to enjoy; why we have a Market Street in Poughkeepsie; why as communities we give new ideas an intellectual assent but are slow to carry them out in practice; why the commercial spirit is so strongly developed among us and the appreciation and love of the beautiful so comparatively weak,—to understand these and a hundred other major and minor characteristics that prevail in the Hudson Valley we must go back at least five hundred years and

examine first the causes that led Europeans to seek new fields, and second the reasons that led them America-ward.

During the Middle Ages the commercial routes of Europe both by land and by sea may be roughly classified as those that connected Europe with the Orient, and those that connected the Mediterranean countries with those of Northern Europe. For practically all routes the great focus was Constantinople. When therefore that city was occupied by the Turks in 1453, the trading countries of Europe faced an *impasse*,—the Turk not only blocked the way, but he had a long memory that went as far back as the Crusades, and there was no hope that he could be dislodged. New avenues of approach to the wealth of the Indies must therefore be found. Heretofore the islands and the peninsulas of the great inland seas had played an important part in commerce,—they had served as stepping-stones to facilitate the passage from shore to shore and to render remote lands comparatively near. By an apparently fortuous chance at the very moment that the old routes to the East were closed by the occupation of Constantinople by an enemy, the discovery of the compass made the mariner independent of the islands. Substituting the compass therefore for the islands, men ventured on the high seas. If the Turk prevented their approach from the east, they would

circumvent the Turk and reach their goal by sailing west. Thus for one hundred and fifty years the one ambition of every great trading company was to find a competent pilot who should open up for them a new route.

Among the most reputed of these sea pilots was an English gentleman, Henry Hudson by name. He enjoyed the friendship and the confidence of the great cartographers of the time and was in frequent conference with them. He exchanged notes, maps, and experiences with the great Dutch cartographer, Domine Plancius, and the merchants of Amsterdam invited him to a conference with reference to entering their service. But they felt that they could not act without the co-operation of their fellow merchants in other parts of the Netherlands, and while they deliberated and hesitated to act the agents of Henry IV. secretly entered into negotiations with him, hoping to forestall the Dutch and secure the services of the renowned pilot for France. Spurred on by the possibility of losing Hudson to their rival, the leading members of the Amsterdam Chamber of the Dutch East India Company acted on their own responsibility and closed the contract with Hudson. It is an idle, but an interesting, diversion to speculate on the different conditions that might prevail in the Hudson Valley to-day had Henry Hudson closed his contract with the emissaries of the

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French king rather than with the merchants of Amsterdam. He thus entered the service of the Dutch East India Company and made his third voyage which resulted in the exploration of the Hudson River from New York to Albany.

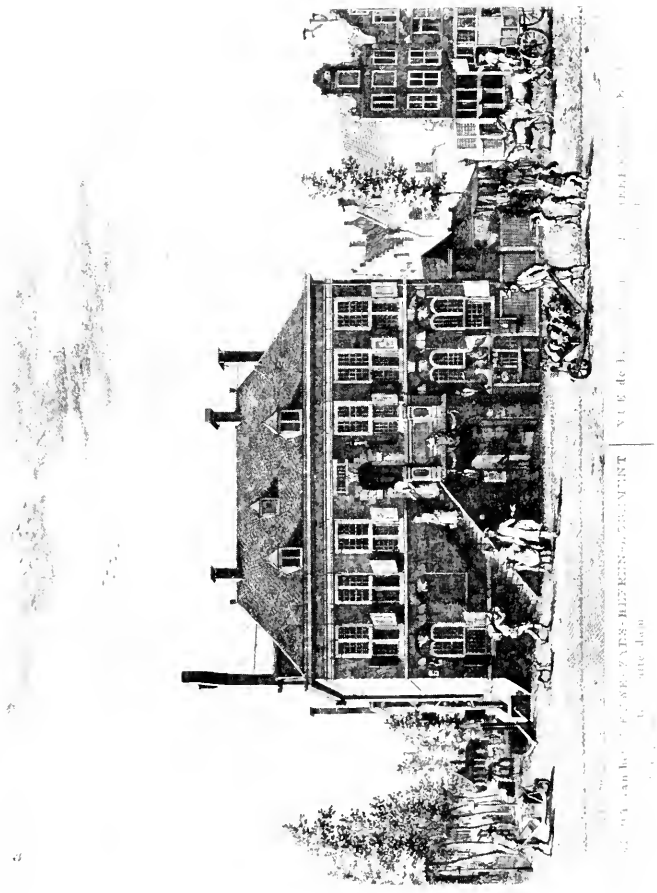
But while Henry Hudson had thus opened up to Dutch occupation an almost unknown territory of enormous extent and richness, he had exceeded the instructions given him by his employers, and he found neither a northwest nor a northeast passage to India. What mattered it that the journal kept by an officer of the *Half Moon* after they reached New York Harbor says "This is a very good Land to fall with and a pleasant Land to see," and that the Dutch sailors who went on shore found the land "pleasant with Grasse and Flowers, and goodly Trees, as ever they had seene, and very sweet smells came from them,"¹—the Dutch East India Company took no interest in the country laid at its feet, and its own interest in the new world languished. A few years later its lost opportunity was seized by its rival, the Dutch West India Company.

The seventeenth century has been called "the age of great monopolies and grasping charters." Foreign trade was not carried on by private initia-

¹ Robert Juet, "The Third Voyage of Master Henry Hudson," in *Narratives of New Netherland*, ed. by J. Franklin Jameson, pp. 17, 19.

tive but by powerful companies that received their charter of privileges from the Crown. England, France, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, Russia and the Netherlands all had their great chartered companies holding various trading monopolies, chiefly in the East Indies. With the opening of the supposed western route to the Indies, corresponding companies were chartered by the various governments and these held the monopoly of trade and claimed the monopoly of their own routes. Yet while the chartered company flourished in special vigor in the seventeenth century, it was not confined to that period,—the chartered company of South Africa of to-day is the historic descendant of the great companies of three hundred years ago.

The object of the chartered company has everywhere and at all times, irrespective of time, place or nationality, been invariably the same,—it has been to seek wealth for itself primarily through trade, sometimes combined with the nominal subsidiary object of Christianizing the native races. It has claimed the control of the territory in which trade has been carried on, but it has never concerned itself with the settlement of this territory except in so far as settlers have seemed necessary agents in carrying on trade. As the object of the chartered company has always been the same, so, while its history has varied in details, in essentials all the companies have passed through the same experiences,—all have quarrelled on the one



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HAARLEMSTRAAT

hand with the Crown from whom they have received their grant of privileges, they have quarrelled on the other hand with the agents and settlers expected to carry out their plans, and all have sooner or later, voluntarily or involuntarily, relinquished their charters. The chartered company has been crushed between the upper and the nether millstone.

Of all the powerful chartered companies whose life history is comprised within the limits of the seventeenth century, none was more powerful than the Dutch West India Company. The States General of Holland in 1621 granted it for a term of twenty-four years a monopoly of trading privileges in the new world, "finding," as they said, "by experience that without the common help, aid and means of a general company, no profitable business can be carried on, protected and maintained in the parts hereafter designated on account of the great risk from pirates, extortions and the like, which are incurred on such long and distant voyages; we, therefore, have resolved that the navigation, trade and commerce in the West Indies, Africa and other countries hereafter designated, shall henceforth not be carried on otherwise than with the common united strength of the merchants and inhabitants of this country and that to this end there shall be established a general company which we will

maintain and strengthen with our help, favor and assistance. and for that purpose furnish with a proper charter and endow with the privileges and exemptions hereafter enumerated.”¹

The Dutch West India Company to whom the charter was granted was made up of merchants residing in different parts of the Netherlands, and it was given the monopoly of trade in the New World and in Africa from the Tropic of Cancer to the Cape of Good Hope, and all persons trading in these parts without the consent of the Company did so under penalty of confiscation of ships and goods. Great as was this concession, it was accompanied by others not inferior in point of influence and power. The Company was given permission to make alliances and contracts with the princes and natives of the country, to build fortresses, to appoint and to remove civil, military, and judicial officers, to promote the settlement of fertile and uninhabited districts, to make good by all such means as could properly be employed all losses sustained through cheating on the part of false friends, or goods or money improperly withheld from them, to apprehend deserters, to defend themselves if trade should be injured in spite of treaties, and to retain all prizes of war, subject to certain necessary deductions. Translating these somewhat veiled phrases into definite statements,

¹ A. J. F. van Laer, ed., *Van Rensselaer Bowvier Manuscripts*, pp. 87, 89. The Charter is given in full both in the original Dutch and in translation.

the meaning is clear,—the States General transferred to the Company the task of continuing the contest with Spain by giving it the right to make reprisals on the high seas. How well it performed the task is evident from a report of its services rendered a few years later by the Directors to the States General,—they have had at heart the maintenance of the true Reformed religion and the liberties of the beloved Fatherland, they have captured the fleet from New Spain, amounting “to so great a treasure, that never did any fleet bring such a prize to this, or any other country,” and they have not only drained the King of Spain’s treasury, but also further pursued him at considerable expense by depriving him of so much silver, which was as blood from one of the arteries of his heart.¹

The obligations incurred by the Company in return for these great concessions seem somewhat nominal and formal. It was required to transmit to the home government contracts and alliances made, to report the situation of fortresses and settlements begun, to send accounts of the equipment of the ships to the home government and to the Chambers of Directors, to render every six years a general accounting of all profits and losses in trade and in war, to keep its capital intact and not to admit new members, and to bind themselves (the Directors) by oath to conduct the affairs of

¹ E. B. O’Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, I., 40-42.

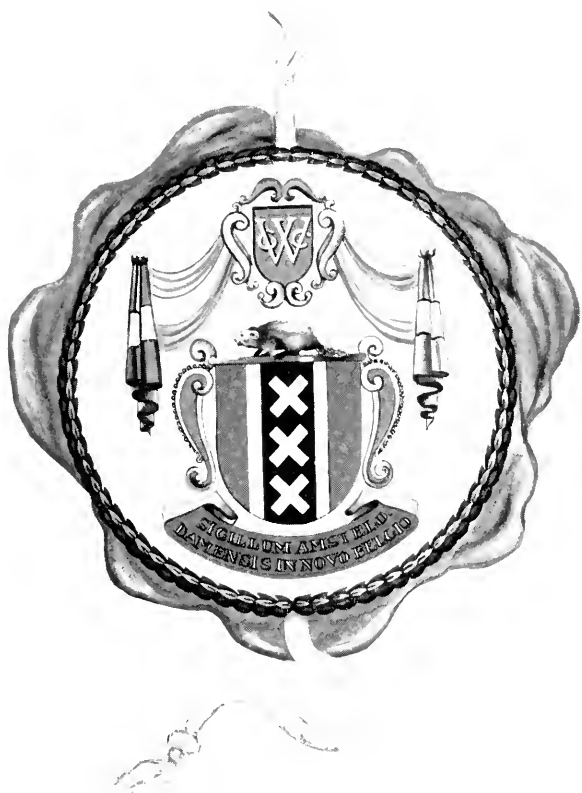
THE DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY ON THE HUDSON

the Company with wisdom and with justice to all.

Their High Mightinesses the Lords States General of the United Netherlands promised on their part to furnish necessary troops, provided they be paid by the Company; not to requisition for its own use the ships, ordnance, or ammunition of the Company without its consent; exemptions from toll to any of the United Provinces for themselves, their ships and their goods; exemptions from export and import duties for eight years; to maintain and defend the trade and navigation of the Company both with money and with ships. They reserved to themselves the confirmation of appointments to office of the governor-general, and demanded an oath of allegiance to themselves as well as to the Company, on the part of governor general, vice-governor, commanders and officers, as also an oath of allegiance by troops to itself as well as to Company, and they reserved a casting vote in case of disagreement in the Assembly.

Special provisions of the Charter concerned the internal management of the Company, and two years later the States General gave their approval to the plan of organization determined on by the Company for its government.¹ How closely this organization was modeled on the federal organization of the United Netherlands is evident from the following table:—

¹ This varied from the original plan in details rather than in fundamental principles.



SEAL OF THE CITY OF NEW AMSTERDAM, 1654

THE DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY ON THE HUDSON

ORGANIZATION OF THE DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY.

	Parts	Directors	Assembly
Amsterdam	4-9	20	8
Zeeland	2-9	12	4
Maas	1-9	14	2
Noorder-quartier	1-9	14	2
Friesland & Groningen. 1-9	1-9	14	2
The States General.			1
	9-9	74	19

The original charter was supplemented by two further amplifications of the privileges conferred, all of these agreements having “a seal pendant of red wax on a cord of white silk.”

Thus was launched on fair seas the great trading monopoly whose history was so vitally connected with that of the great river valley opened up to the Dutch by the English pilot, Henry Hudson.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, not only the richest city in the United Netherlands, but the richest and the greatest mercantile city of all Europe was Amsterdam. In the prolonged contest with Spain it had not suffered severely and its recuperative powers had been great. The misfortunes of the cities of the Spanish Netherlands, Antwerp in particular, had worked to its advantage, while the change in commercial routes had left stranded cities like Lisbon and Venice that had

never dreamed of it as a rival. The persecuted of all religious faiths had flocked to it, enterprising merchants, skilled workmen, successful manufacturers, distinguished artists had all found in it a place of refuge, and each in turn had contributed to its wealth and prosperity. Its ships were found in all the known waters of the globe, the treasures of the Indies were unloaded on its docks, its warehouses held the choicest products of the world, the business of Europe was transacted on the Amsterdam Exchange, and the Bank of Amsterdam, which quickly came to be an object of admiration on the part of all, was founded in the very year in which the truce with Spain was made. The formation in 1602 of the Dutch East India Company with a capital nearly eight-fold that of the English East India Company had resulted in such phenomenal success that it is said to have divided among its stockholders upwards of four times its original capital during the first twenty years of its existence and it had quickly raised Amsterdam to the very pinnacle of commercial pre-eminence. What could be more fitting than that Amsterdam should play the leading part in the organization and history of the Dutch West India Company which, furnished with the extraordinary powers that have been described, seemed destined to outstrip its rival, the Dutch East India Company? What its opportunity was is evident from the table already shown giving the organization of the Company; and that the Company

quickly availed itself of the opportunity is also evident from the records. The States General erected the territory known as New Netherland into a province and invested it with the armorial bearings of a count. The management of the province was given to the Chamber of Amsterdam, and Peter Minuet was appointed the first director-general. It is also evident that the directors of the Company made unseemly haste to take up lands. Even before the charter had been approved by the States General and while its provisions were still under discussion by the Company itself, several of them sent out agents to purchase the Indian titles to land within the province to be assigned to the Company, and thus be ready to become patroons as soon as the charter passed the seals. Samuel Godyn and Samuel Blommaert took up territory on the Delaware River and called their colony Swansdale,—this was the first colony in New Netherland. Michel Pauw took up lands on the west side of the Hudson in the present state of New Jersey and called his grant Pavonia, while Kiliaen Van Rensselaer took up the extensive tracts on the upper Hudson,—all these were members of the Amsterdam Chamber. Thus was inaugurated the part which the rich and influential city of Amsterdam was to take in the development of the Hudson Valley and the adjacent territory.

There is an old saying that it is the first step that counts, yet the history of the Dutch West

India Company is proof that the first step is ineffective unless a second one is taken. The Dutch West India Company had secured from the States General a charter giving it the monopoly of trade in America, but it was ineffective without colonists through whom trade could be carried on,—the half of the pair of shears needed its complement. But the affairs of the Company were complicated by the assertion of trading privileges in the same territory claimed by English rivals; there was a difference of opinion in the Company itself as to the desirability of encouraging settlements, the territory was maintained at great expense and settlements were made slowly.

The difficulties with their English neighbors on the east were temporarily settled through the intervention of the English king, and a polite correspondence carried on between Governor Bradford of Plymouth and Director-General Minuit. The Chartered Company had in its origin sought for itself only the advantages accruing through trade, it had been given the permission to establish settlements, but it had been divided in opinion as to the wisdom of so doing. The majority of the Company had been slow to perceive that the conditions in an undeveloped country differed from those in one long established,—that while the Dutch East India Company had grown enormously rich through trade with thickly populated countries, their own dividends would be precarious if they relied entirely on trade with the Indians and

that thus the territory could not become permanently profitable. For some years, however, the majority of the Company maintained its position that the fur trade with the Indians was a sufficient basis for it, or that if it did not yield an adequate revenue, it at least ought to do so.

But the Company found, instead of revenue, an increasing burden of expense and dwindling profits. After seven years of more or less disappointment with the results secured through trade alone, the Assembly of the Nineteen inaugurated a plan for encouraging the planting of colonies or settlements in the territory over which they had jurisdiction. When, therefore, it determined on this step, its plan for carrying out the policy coincided with that followed by the States General of Holland and by the Crown in other countries. It was not in a position to undertake colonization directly, except on the Island of Manhattan, and it therefore devised a plan whereby it delegated to others the right of founding colonies, thus inaugurating what is known as the patroon system of the Hudson Valley.

To understand the patroon system, we must first of all remember that while it had certain characteristics that differentiated it from other forms of settlement, it had, on the other hand, a far larger number of characteristics that it shared in common with them.

The theory of the ownership of newly discovered or conquered territory has always been a simple one,—it belongs to the Crown to be disposed of according to his own best judgment. But the difficulties of administering remote lands by the king in person have been insuperable and since the early years of the seventeenth century a general process of development has been followed.

The first stage has been the exaggerated reports of the wealth of the country brought back by the first discoverers and adventurers,—reports industriously circulated by friends and neighbors, reproduced in current drama and poem and finally reaching fabulous proportions. Marston, for example, in his play *Eastward Ho* written in 1605, makes one of his characters, Seagull, recently returned from America, describe the wealth found at hand. “I tell thee,” he says, “golde is more plentifull there than copper is with us; and for as much redde copper as I can bring, I’ll have thrise the weight in golde. Why, man, all their dripping-pans are pure golde, and all the chains with which they chaine up their streets are massive golde; all the prisoners they take are fettered in golde; and for rubies and diamonds, they goes forth in holy dayes and gather them by the seashore, to hang on their children’s coates and stick in their children’s caps, as commonly as our children wear saffron-gilt brooches and groates with holes in them.”

It has been but natural that the second step has been the formation of a stock company to exploit the new lands. Since the king himself has been unable to take immediate advantage of the reputed wealth laid at his feet, he has given an attentive ear to those who have asked the privilege of exploiting the new fields in his name. Thus the chartered company has been formed,—a small group of men have subscribed stock and received a general charter of incorporation from the crown. The charter has secured certain privileges to the authority granting it, while conferring still greater ones on those receiving it. Thus have been formed all the great chartered companies of the past three hundred years. Nor, as has been seen, has this manner of developing a new country been peculiar to any one nation. England, Holland, France and Denmark, all chartered companies to trade with the East Indies during the seventeenth century. The English Crown chartered the London Company with a dual organization entitling it to trade in Virginia and in Plymouth; the States of Holland chartered the Dutch West India Company to trade in America; Sweden incorporated the South Company to develop its possessions on the Delaware; Spain granted the Chartered Company of Seville a monopoly of the American trade. Country after country has begun in a similar way the development of its newly acquired lands. Trade has come first, but settlements have followed hard in the wake.

The objects of the *colonists* sent out under the chartered companies were various,—they came for religious freedom, or for political freedom, or for personal wealth, or to escape from adverse economic or social conditions at home. But the object of the chartered company has everywhere and at all times, irrespective of time, place or nationality, been the same,—it has been to seek wealth for itself primarily through trade, while the settlement of the territory has been a secondary consideration.

The Chartered Company, with trade as its primary object, has not concerned itself too closely with the character of the colonists settling under its protection and it has cared little about the objects that have led the colonists to seek a new home. It has sent out vagrants, debtors and criminals, as well as political refugees and religious zealots; it has encouraged gentlemen of leisure and others of no occupation, as well as men skilled in various forms of industry. Is it strange that the Chartered Company has never been successful as a colonizer?

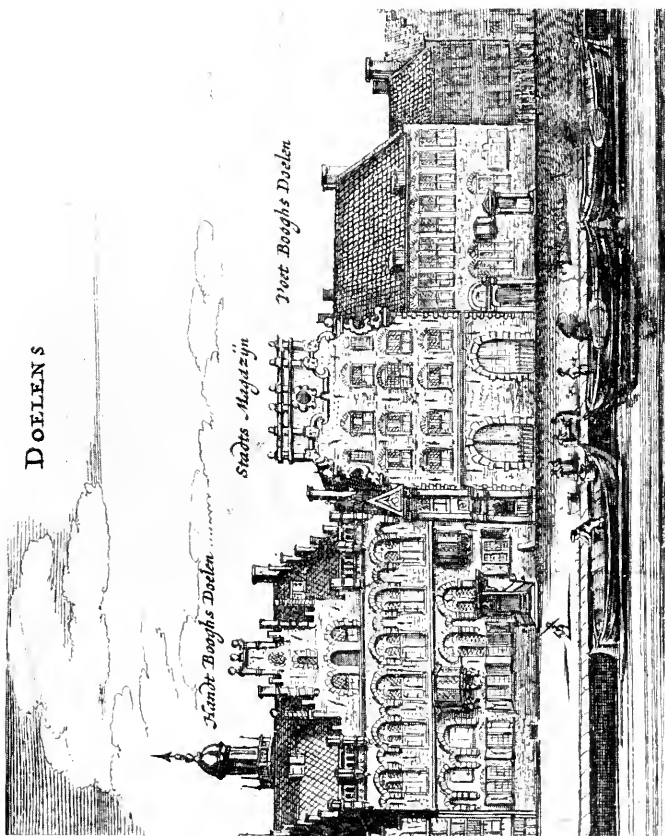
Yet we must remember the difficulties that have beset the Chartered Company. Its task has been a two-fold one. It has had in the first place to secure as many privileges for itself as could be wrested from the Crown. These have generally concerned the right of governing the colony, freedom of trade, a definitely stated share of the mineral wealth of the colony and similar privileges.

But the task of the Chartered Company was but half accomplished when it had secured a definite statement under the great seal of its own relation to the Crown. There remained the even harder task of arranging the inducements to be held out to prospective colonists. In some cases, as in Virginia, settlers were induced to come out through the offer of passage money to be redeemed by service. Others, as in Plymouth, were offered a part of the proceeds of the venture. The Georgia Company promised freedom from past debts. Massachusetts Bay held out the promise of freedom from the forms of religious worship established in England. The Dutch West India Company offered large tracts of land. But in every case the Company reserved for itself directly, and for the Crown indirectly, the internal and external management of the colony established under its patronage.

The colony might, as in Virginia, elect representatives to a colonial assembly, but it was the Chartered Company that gave the privilege. It might choose its own executive officers, but this favor was due to the Chartered Company. If religious freedom was assured, it was at the hand of the Company. If the "concessions and agreements" virtually gave to the colonists the absolute right of self-government, it was the result of a self-denying ordinance on the part of the body standing as an intermediary between the Crown and the Colonists.

The privileges retained by the Crown in its grant to the Chartered Company were somewhat more vague and general in character. All laws made for or by the Colonists were to conform to the laws of the home country; a reservation of one-fifth of all mineral wealth discovered was often left to the Crown; and final judgment in important suits might be left to the Crown,—these were the provisions usually found.

Among all the Chartered Companies none held out inducements to prospective settlers on so magnificent a scale as did our Dutch West India Company in its efforts through a settlement to build up trade and commerce in New Netherland,—trade and commerce that were to redound to its own wealth and prosperity. It is possible that the Dutch West India Company was enabled to confer its privileges with a more lordly hand than did other Companies, and established an intermediary between itself and the colonists, as was the case nowhere else in America, in part because of the somewhat loose headship of the government of Holland. The inducements the Company held out to those who desired to undertake the responsibilities of planting colonies in New Netherland and sending cattle thither are embodied in the Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions drawn up by the representatives of the Company and approved by their High Mightinesses, the Lords States General, June 7, 1629.



THE DUTCH WEST INDIA HOUSE ON THE SINGEL

The preamble states that they are drawn up for the benefit of the Company and for the profit of the patroons, masters and private persons who will plant colonies.

What were the privileges thus granted with royal hand to the patroons? They were first the privilege of sending over in the ships of the Company agents to inspect the country; all were to be acknowledged patroons who agreed to plant there a colony of fifty souls upwards of fifteen years of age within four years after giving due notice of such intention; "from the very hour" that they make known the situation of the places they propose to colonize, they shall have preference over all others to free ownership of the lands chosen, and if subsequently they desire to make another selection, they may do so after applying to the commander and council; patroons may fix the limits of their colony sixteen miles on one side of a navigable river, or eight miles on both sides, and as far inland as the situation of the occupants will permit; they shall forever hold this land in fief from the Company, together with the fruit, plants, minerals, rivers and springs, and exclusive rights of fishing, fowling and grinding; if anyone founds a city, he shall have authority to appoint officers and magistrates and to use such titles as he sees fit according to the quality of the persons; they may dispose of these fiefs by will; they may have the use of contiguous lands, rivers and woods until otherwise occupied; patroons and colonists may

send all their people and effects in the ships of the Company, under conditions specified; patroons of colonies in New Netherland, and colonists on the island of the *Manhattes* shall have freedom to sail and traffic along the entire coast from Florida to Newfoundland, provided they return to the island of the *Manhattes* with all such goods and pay five per cent duty to the Company; if the ships of the patroons take prizes from the enemy, the patroons may retain two-thirds of the value, "in consideration of the expense and risk at which they have been"; freedom of trade, except fur trade, although, under certain conditions, the right to trade in fur is granted at places where the Company has no agent; exemption from all taxes and all export and import duties for ten years; the Company will not take from the service of the patroons any of their colonists, either man or woman, son or daughter, man-servant or maid-servant,—even if they desire to leave them, they will not receive them, or permit them to leave the service of the patroons without the consent of the patroons in writing, and they will make every effort to return to the patroon anyone who leaves his service contrary to contract; an appeal may be taken from all judgments given by the courts of the patroons for upwards of fifty guilders (\$20) to the Company's commander and council in New Netherland; patroons may ship cod to neutral countries on payment of a duty to the Company; they are entitled

to all minerals, precious stones, or pearl fisheries discovered; and they are speedily to find ways and means of supporting a minister and a school-master; the colonies may each send an agent to the government to care for the common interests, and all colonies must annually make an exact report to the home government of their colonies and lands; "the Company will endeavor to supply the colonists with as many blacks as they possibly can," but not to a greater extent or for a longer time than they think proper; the Company promises to finish the fort on the island of the *Manhattes* without delay.

Nor did the Company confine its benefactions to the lordly patroons,—it recognized that private persons might wish to settle with a smaller number than would entitle them to settle as a patroon, and all such were given that privilege and might with the approval of the director and council, choose and hold as much land as they can properly cultivate, and fishing and hunting rights were accorded them.

The Company also turned its attention to the Indians, and decreed that satisfaction must be given them for all land settled outside the limits of *Manhattes* Island.

The Company did not stop here,—in its zeal to found a perfect state it provided that the patroons must give proper instructions to colonists so that they may be ruled according to the rule of government of the Assembly of the Nineteen.

The Company then reserved to itself the island of the *Manhattes* and the lands lying between the limits of the colonies, announced its intention of settling the island of *Manhattes* first, declared this to be the staple port for all products and wares found on the North River and lands adjacent, with certain necessary reservation; claimed one-third of all prizes taken from the enemy by the ships of the patroons, the monopoly of the fur trade,¹ the transportation of all raw materials used by the colonists at fixed rates, and then having forbidden to the colonists the manufacture of all woolen, linen, or cotton cloth on pain of being banished and peremptorily punished as oath breakers, the Dutch West India Company sat back to take its ease.²

Alas, the troubles of the Company had but just begun. It is related that when Louis XVIII attempted to create a new nobility at the close of the French Revolution that had destroyed the old nobility, he found many willing to be made dukes and earls, but none willing to be made anything else. That difficulty the Dutch West India Company had laid up for itself when it sought to parcel out the vast territories along the Hudson among a number of patroons, leaving to them the

¹ It is interesting to note that furs are to-day peddled on the promenades at Scheveningen.—a possible survival of the interest in the fur trade exemplified in the Dutch West India Company.

² A. J. F. van Laer, ed., *Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts*, pp. 137-153.

responsibility of finding colonists to enter in and till the land,—many were willing to be patroons, but few were willing to be colonists. It is possible that the Company vaguely appreciated this difficulty and that it was the effort to forestall it that led the Company to attempt to square the circle,—if any persons had not sufficient means to take up a patroonship and yet (by implication) did not wish to go out as a colonist under a patroon, they might preempt as much land as they could cultivate, provided the land lay outside the limits of that assigned to patroons. They were to be called freemen, or free merchants, they had liberty to engage in fishing, and to set up salt works, and they were under the immediate protection of the Company. Is it a wonder that many preferred, like Miles Standish, to be first in a little Iberian village rather than be second in Rome?

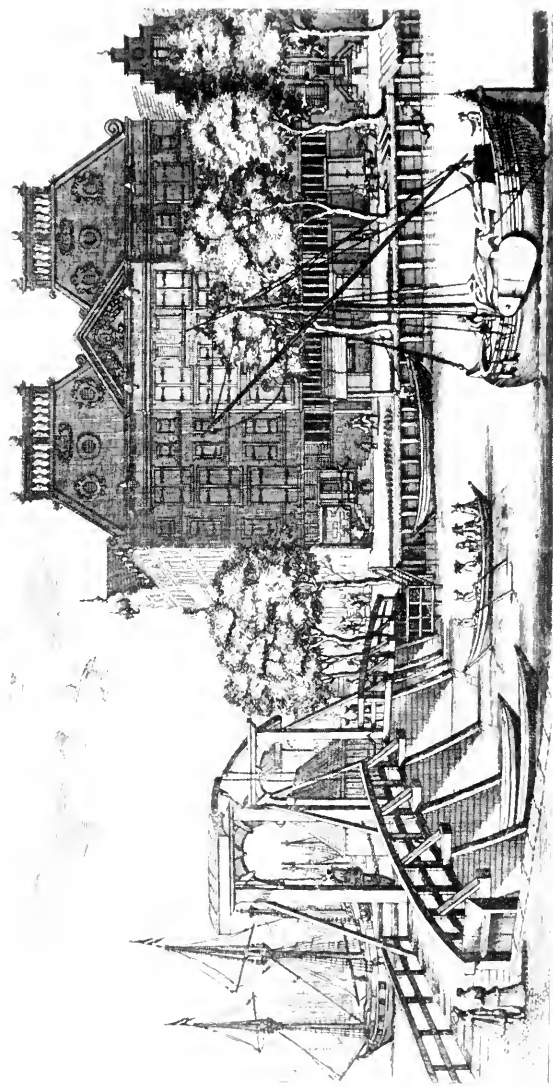
So attractive had the exploitation of the new world seemed to the individual directors of the Company that more than one had preempted land within the territory claimed by the United Netherlands before the Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions had been granted. Alas, for them, their troubles also had but just begun when they took up land under the protection of the Company, even though this protection was re-enforced by the grant of the Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions, and even though this was itself re-inforced by a subsequent charter declaring that “The Patroons shall forever possess all the lands situate

within their limits, together with the produce, superficies, minerals, rivers and fountains thereof, with high, low and middle jurisdiction, hunting, fishing, fowling and milling, the lands remaining allodial, but the jurisdiction as of a perpetual hereditary fief, devolvable by death as well to females as to males, and fealty and homage for which is to be rendered to the Company, on each of such occasions, with a pair of iron gauntlets, redeemable by twenty guilders within a year and six weeks, at the Assembly of the XIX, here, or before the Governor there.”¹

Material was stored up by it for endless disputes. The patroons objected to obeying the rules of the Company, to the heavy restrictions on the fur trade, to the presence of an agent to collect duties on furs purchased, because they were not informed when there was room in ships of the Company to carry their goods, because the colonists were required to take oath renouncing the privileges granted by patroons, because the Company refused to reimburse them for losses growing out of failure to afford sufficient protection, to the difficulty of getting cattle,—“If I can get no animals,” exclaimed Van Rensselaer in despair, “I shall not succeed in bringing over fifty persons,”—because they were bidden to make brick without straw, since while desiring to colonize their estates they encountered the greatest difficulties in getting colonists, goods or cattle.

¹ Charter of 1640.

*MAAGAZIN De la Compagnie DES INDIENS
 DE LA WEST INDIËSCHE HUYSEN*



THE DUTCH WEST INDIA HOUSE
 ON THE RAPENBERG

Thus endless bickerings and quarrels between the Company and the patroons seemed to be the only fruit of the elaborate scheme devised by the Company for settling its vast territories. The Company had carried on the experiment at a loss to itself. The colonies of the patroons had not been a success, the Company could not carry on an extensive system of colonization, and there were moreover internal disagreements as to the advisability of colonizing it. The question of even turning over the affairs of the Company to the States General was broached in 1638, but this was not done. It was evident, however, that something must be done, and the result was a new plan that went into effect in 1638 whereby the trade of New Netherland was thrown open to all. This lessened, for the time being, the disputes between the Company and the Patroons, but it did not end them. Another effort in the direction of peace was made, and as a result of the joint efforts of the States General, the Company and the Patroons, the States General ratified, in 1640, a new Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions granted by the Company "to all Patroons, Masters or Private persons who will plant any colonies or introduce cattle in New Netherland."

Ten years later, in 1650, still a third Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions was granted, modifying somewhat the clauses relative to trade and to the administration of justice, but not affecting land tenures.

No one had given thought to the colonists, yet they too had had their heartburnings,—they had been in debt to the patroons for their outfit and for their passage, they were compelled to purchase supplies of the agent of the patroon, and they may have felt that the patroons were passing on to them all the troubles they, on their part, had suffered at the hands of the Company.

What was the net result of this elaborate plan to colonize the Hudson Valley in the interests of the trade of the Dutch West India Company? During the fifty-five years that the territory known as New Netherland was under the jurisdiction of the United Netherlands, from 1609 to 1664, but nine patroonships had been established, only one had succeeded, and "all the others had ceased to exist before the English came in, except Van der Donck's, which was moribund." Of the four directors of the West India Company who took up land under its authority, not a single one came to this country, no patroon had helped to dominate the province, only a few hundred acres had been re-claimed from the wilderness, and but six hundred and thirty-eight grants of land, varying in size from a town lot to a large estate, had been made to any one, either patroon or colonist, during the half century and more of Dutch rule.¹ On the other hand, a long train of difficulties growing

¹ Mrs. Schuyler Van Rennselaer, *History of the City of New York in the Seventeenth Century*, I., pp. 475-476 *passim*.

The list of grants is given in E. B. O'Callaghan, *History of New Netherland*, II., pp. 581-593.

out of the system of land tenure had been laid up,—difficulties that lasted for more than two hundred years and came to a crisis in the anti-rent troubles of New York State.

To all outward appearances, if “the Dutch had taken Holland,” they had not taken New Netherland.

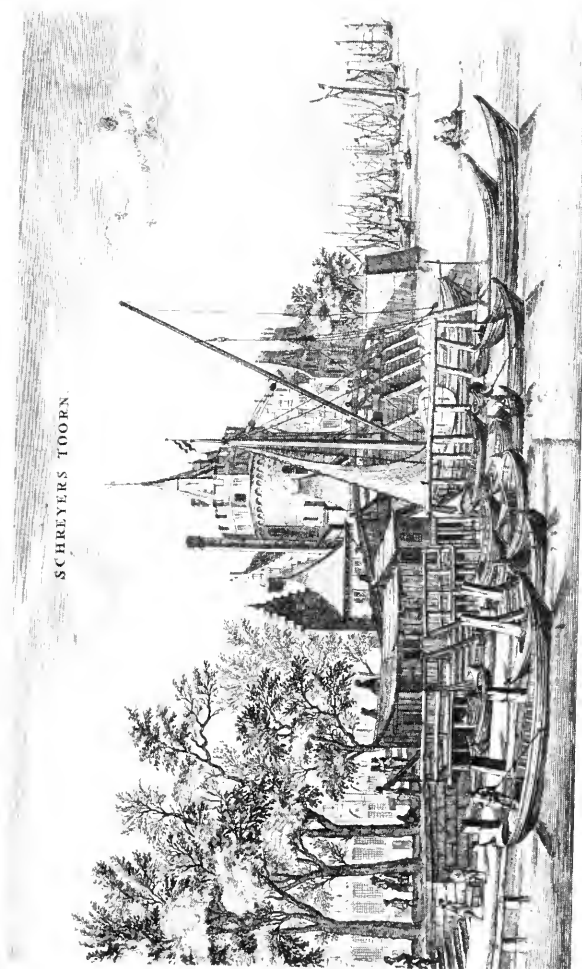
One of the first members of the Dutch West India Company to file a claim to land in New Netherland was a wealthy Amsterdam merchant, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer by name. He had been a country boy, born and baptized in the village of Hasselt near Zwolle, but some years later we find him apprenticed to a relative,—a rich jeweler of Amsterdam; traveling widely in Europe in the interests of his employer, establishing himself in business on his own account, amassing a substantial fortune, forming a marriage alliance with a family of means in Utrecht, and setting up his household gods in a new part of Amsterdam, on the Keizersgracht.¹

He subscribed largely to the stock of the West India Company, was recognized in Amsterdam as a man of ability, of wide experience, and of practical knowledge of many fields of business outside

¹ An excellent idea of the house occupied by a well-to-do Hollander, like Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, can be gained from a contemporaneous seventeenth century doll's house in the Suys Museum, Utrecht, and from two others, less elegant, in the Ryks Museum, Amsterdam.

that of jewelry,—a man of affairs and of remarkable executive ability. As a director of the West India Company he urged upon his colleagues the necessity of developing the new territory through agriculture, merchant and trader though he was, and predicted the necessity of abandoning New Netherland if this policy were not pursued. Unfortunately for the Company, it was long before the majority of the directors gave even a grudging assent to his plans, and then he and his supporters were left to combat the opposition on the part of the minority,—an opposition so serious as to wreck the other colonies started at the same time as his own.

Kiliaen Van Rensselaer was willing, however, to undertake the responsibility of an agricultural colony if only the opportunity were given him,—he had been born in a country village, he had already added to his own wealth by reclaiming large tracts of sandy heath lands to the southeast of Amsterdam, and his courage was equal to attacking the difficulties presented by the undeveloped lands of the new world. His agents quickly selected for him an extensive tract, mainly, at first, on the west side of the North (Hudson) River, near Fort Orange, covering the present sites of Albany and Troy, and subsequently large additions were made to the original grant. He presumably knew well the peasants living near the waste lands reclaimed through his initiative, several from that locality were persuaded to try their



THE WEEPERS' TOWER

fortunes in the new colony, and contracts were made with other venturesome spirits from Norway, Sweden and Denmark,—in subsequent years colonists were secured from other foreign countries, including France, England, and Germany from the Rhine to Pomerania and East Prussia, and as far south as Baden. Two farmsteads were laid out and it seemed as if the affairs of the colony had opened under favorable auspices. Yet if the general difficulties of the patroons were so great as to compel more than one to abandon his claim, they were multiplied four-fold in the case of Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, beset behind and before and on all sides with concrete troubles that would have downed a lesser man. He had great difficulty in persuading colonists to go out, a considerable number made contracts to go but failed to keep them, some even deserting as the ship was about to leave,¹ the plague in Amsterdam had depleted the ranks of laborers, and there was an abundance of work to be found at home,—hence he found it almost impossible to get the much-needed workmen, especially carpenters and smiths; every obstacle was put in the way of his securing cattle, and the Indians killed part of the herd finally obtained; one of his new farmsteads burned; the winter seed failed for one farm; his tobacco planter proved inefficient; the freight charges of the Company were very heavy, and it was almost impossible to secure transportation

¹ Van Laer, p. 56.

for his goods at any price; he was forbidden to purchase goods belonging to the Company, and forbidden "to barter the necessaries of life for dairy produce and grain"; the restrictions on the fur trade were a constant source of irritation, and the contraband trade carried on diminished his profits by half; the change in the personnel of the directors made a majority against the patroons, the local officers appointed by the Company were his enemies, some of the directors were jealous of him, his co-partners disagreed with him, and demanded a division of the property, although they had never troubled themselves "to break a lance for the colony in the Assembly of the Nineteen."¹ We may indeed question whether the honor of having a county in New York State subsequently bear his name was a sufficient compensation for these and many other trials attending the possession of a patroonship.

It is conceivable that other stout hearts might have encountered all these and similar difficulties and triumphed over them as did Kiliaen Van Rensselaer,—Governor Bradford and the Pilgrims contended with famine and pestilence at Plymouth,—Captain John Smith met inefficiency and insubordination in Virginia,—ingratitude was meted out to Oglethrope in Georgia,—John

¹ Van Laer, p. 84. See Memorial to the Assembly of the Nineteen, 1633, in van Laer, pp. 235-250.

Locke's philosophical theories failed to secure a foothold in the Carolinas, disappointment and discouragement are shadowy forms ever attendant on the formation of new enterprises. But who, except Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, ever added to all these obstacles that of non-residence,—of managing a colony and a territory he never saw, at a distance of more than three thousand miles in space and four months distance in time?

There has recently been made available for our use a collection of manuscripts from the pen of Kiliaen Van Rensselaer. It includes the letters, memorials, and instructions written by him during the thirteen years from 1630 to 1643, to his colonists, to his partners, to the Dutch West India Company, and to the States General, and through this collection we are able to see reflected as in a mirror the great patroon of the Upper Hudson. It is but natural that the instructions concern first of all the general organization of the Colony, yet he does not forget to send a silver-plated rapier with baldric and a black hat with plume to Rutger Hendrickson as a badge of office in his capacity as Schout of Rensselaerswyck, and four black hats with silver bands to the persons to act as schepens and councilors of Rensselaerswyck; he sends a copy of the oath to be administered to the officers, and a copy of the Bible to be read every Sunday and on the usual holidays, and he appoints Brandt Peelen as reader. In the management of the farms, no detail escapes him,—if more butter is

made than is needed, it must be preserved with salt to make it fit for shipment, though he considers it more profitable to make cheese than butter; a goodly number of hogs must be kept on each farm,—they can be trained to run in the woods in the day time and to come home at night, and if they must be tended by a swineherd during the day, it is not necessary for each farm to have a boy for that purpose, since one person can easily watch all the hogs together, and if the houses are too widely separated, the hogs can be taken for the night now to one farm and then to the other; he knows just what the increase in the livestock has been during the year; that a cow has been bitten by a snake and died; that certain chickens claimed as boot in a trade were not boot according to the contract and must be paid for; that Roeloff Janssen has grossly run up his account in drawing provisions, and that his wife, mother and sister and others must have given things away, which can not be allowed; he plans to grind meal to sell to the Brownists toward the north, or to the English toward the south; he advises his nephew to be on the lookout for silkworms since they are likely to be found where there are mulberry trees; he thinks a brickyard might be run with profit, but the clay must be taken from his land; he fits out a cargo for the colony and orders duffels from Leyden,—they are very expensive at thirty-five stiver a yard, but twelve pieces will be needed, half of them red and half steel gray, and

he cautions his agent and partner to look out for the width, for the last duffels sent from Leyden were narrower; when the shipment of the duffels was unduly delayed, he countermands half the order, but later orders in addition two pieces of Leyden grosgrain, double dyed, light liver color or gray, and two pieces of Leyden serge, first quality, color at the discretion of the buyer—the lowest prices will suit him best;—he presses once more to know when the duffels will be ready, and in a fourth letter he again urges haste in the matter of the Leyden duffels, since the Campen duffels are already finished.

It has been said that Kiliaen Van Rensselaer never saw the colony that bore his name. But was there anything in Rensselaerswyck that he did not see?

All the stars were in conjunction when Colonel Richard Nicolls, armed with orders from the Duke of York as Lord High Admiral of England appeared in the harbor of New Amsterdam in 1664 and demanded the surrender of the Province.

On the side of England, the restoration of Charles II. to the throne had consolidated and strengthened the nation against its rival Holland, while the English colonies had been put under the general care of a Standing Council for Foreign Plantations with instructions to take “all prudential means for the rendering those dominions

useful to England, and England helpful to them.” One of the first manifestations of this plan of mutual helpfulness was the grant of a charter to the Colony of Connecticut that united to it the previously independent colony of New Haven, and granted to it all the territory from Narragansett Bay to Delaware Bay, including all the adjacent islands,—thus granting to the Colony mainland and islands already occupied by the Dutch under grants made by the States General of Holland.

This grant was the realization of a long standing insistence on the right of the English to this territory through priority of claim. Governor Bradford of Plymouth, as early as 1627, had, with much politeness but with equal firmness, insisted on the priority of the English claim to the territory occupied by the Dutch, and had urged his Dutch neighbors to “clear the title” of their “planting in these parts which his Majesty hath, by patent, granted to divers his nobles and subjects of quality; lest it be a bone of division in these stirring evil times, which God forbid. We persuade ourselves, that now may be easily and seasonably done, which will be harder and with more difficulty obtained hereafter, and perhaps not without blows.”

In 1642 the English ambassador at the Hague had urged the English in Connecticut “not to forbear to put forward their plantations, and crowd on—crowding the Dutch out of those places where they had occupied.”

While the English leaders were thus asserting their legal right to the territory held by the Dutch, English colonists were going in and taking possession of the land, and were often warmly welcomed by the resident Dutch authorities. English traders established themselves on Manhattan Island; English settlers came in from New England and from the southern colonies and settled on Long Island and in Westchester County; in 1641 the Dutch West India Company had granted a charter of freedoms and privileges to "a considerable number of respectable Englishmen and their clergyman" who had desired to settle under their protection. As late as 1661 the States General of Holland urged "Christian people of tender conscience, in England or elsewhere oppressed," to settle in New Netherland.

Thus by 1664 various causes had combined to make a large English element in New Netherland,—a desire to escape from the vexatious restrictions of New England, the opportunities for religious freedom and for trade, "a hankering after land." To many, therefore, New Netherland had for a time seemed indeed "Vreedenland,"—the Land of Peace.

It was therefore over a colony part English as well as part Dutch that Peter Stuyvesant was appointed director-general in 1647. In his zealous efforts to uphold the authority of the Company whose deputy he was, he antagonized both elements in the colony. Soon a petition and a remon-

strance were sent to the States General asking them to take over the management of the Province and protesting that "a covetous governor makes poor subjects," while under more favorable conditions New Netherland would "in a few years be a brave place." In 1653 a convention met in New Amsterdam at which four Dutch and four English towns were represented. Nineteen persons signed the *Remonstrance*¹ to the States General, protesting against the arbitrary government of the director general and of these ten were of Dutch and nine of English birth.

The way had therefore been prepared for the occupation of the territory by the English government in 1664 in three general ways,—by the long assertion of a legal claim to the territory on the part of the English, by the presence in the territory of large numbers of English settlers, and by the all but universal dissatisfaction with the administration of the province by the resident Dutch director general.

On their side the Dutch had also unknowingly been preparing their own downfall. Their rule in New Netherland had been weakened by internal dissensions in the Dutch West India Company, by the quarrels between the Company and the directors general resident in New Netherland, by the constant friction between the directors general and the settlers,—it seemed as if every man's hand was against every man. The Dutch West

¹ Given in full in O'Callaghan, *New Netherland*. II., 243-246.

India Company, discouraged by these dissensions and on the verge of bankruptcy, had surrendered its claims to all its territory on the Delaware River. Its director-general, Peter Stuyvesant, had antagonized the Dutch colonists in New Amsterdam and aroused the hostility of Rensselaerswyck further north. Long Island was in rebellion, difficulties in the Esopus region between the settlers and the Indians had weakened the colonies there, while throughout the province the Indians were restless and dangerous. Is it strange that when Colonel Nicolls appeared before New Amsterdam, offering most generous terms of surrender, nearly a hundred of the leading burghers sent to the director general a remonstrance against further attempts to hold the province for the Dutch?

“Thus ended,” says De Lancey, “the Dutch dominion in America, and thus forever passed away the great Batavian Province of New Netherland from the Republic of the United Netherlands.” Yet not so. It is true that the technical control had passed away but “the Dutch had taken New York.” In the period between 1630 and 1664 land grants of all kinds, from a patroonship to a single lot on Manhattan Island, had been made to the number of six hundred and thirty-eight.¹ The house had been sold over their heads and they had a new landlord, but the rent was not raised and repairs and improvements were more readily

¹ See *ante*, p. 36, footnote.

made than had been under the previous landlord. The ultimate owner of the property was no longer a company of Dutch merchants, but an English duke,—the heir apparent to the English throne,—yet Dutch nomenclature, Dutch architecture, Dutch social customs, Dutch laws, the descendants of the original Dutch settlers are still an influence, perhaps the predominant influence, in the Hudson Valley. The Dutch Church retained its creed, discipline, worship, lands, property, and remained unchanged in every way, but it was no longer controlled by the Dutch West India Company or maintained by them, and thus technically it ceased to be the Established Church of Holland.

Nothing in our history is more remarkable than this persistence of the Dutch influence in the Hudson Valley, when the period of Dutch occupation was so brief, the number of Dutch settlers so small, the territory held by them so sparsely settled, and the influence of the individual settlers apparently so slight.

And the manors on the Hudson? It is probable that nine Dutch patroonships had been established in New Netherland. All but two of these, Rensselaerswyck and Colon-Donck, had been abandoned when the English took possession of the territory. The Van Rensselaer estate descended to an heir of Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, who took the oath of allegiance to the Duke of York and was thus con-

firmed in his possession of the property. Adrian Van der Donck died a few years before the arrival of the English, his estate passed to his widow, who re-married and removed to Virginia, and the estate was subsequently divided and sold. From it were formed the English manors of Westchester County. The transition from Dutch patroonship to English manor, from patroon to lord of the manor was an easy and simple one,—the oath of allegiance was taken to the Duke of York instead of to the Dutch West India Company, and the province of New Netherland became the proprietary colony of New York. When the Duke of York became James II, king of England, the proprietary colony of New York became, *ipso facto*, the royal colony of New York. The king was dead, and all the people cried, “Long live the King!” The patroonships on the Hudson were Dutch, the manors on the Hudson were English. “But that is another story.”



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